

# Notice of Allowability

Application No.

09/705,486

Examiner

Scott L. Jarrett

Applicant(s)

GENDLER, JOSEPH

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 12/15/2006.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 68,74,76-79,81,84,85,90,92-97,105 and 111-114.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
  - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some\* c) ☐ None of the:
    1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
    2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
    3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* Certified copies not received: \_\_\_\_\_.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

**THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.**

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
  5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
    - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
      - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
    - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

## Attachment(s)

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☒ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08),  
Paper No./Mail Date 11/16/2005
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material

5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6. ☒ Interview Summary (PTO-413),  
Paper No./Mail Date 8/1/2007
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

  
**TARIQ R. HAFIZ**  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600

### **EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT**

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. James Miner (Reg. No. 40,444) on July 31, 2007.

The examiner's amendment below cancels Claims 1-67, 69-73, 75, 80, 82-83, 86-89, 91, 98-104 and 106-110, amends claims 68, 74, 76-79, 81, 84-85, 90, 92-97, 105 and 111 and adds new claims 112-114. Claims 68, 74, 76-79, 81, 84-85, 90, 92-97, 105 and 111-114, as presented below, are allowed.

### ***Information Disclosure Statement***

The information disclosure statement (IDS) submitted on November 16, 2005 is in compliance with the provisions of 37 CFR 1.97. Accordingly, the information disclosure statement is being considered by the examiner.

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in this application.

Claims 1-67 (Canceled)

68. (Currently amended) A computer implemented method for managing a construction project using a processing system, the method comprising:

establishing a database in the processing system, the processing system maintained by a project management entity;

providing funding approval associated with the project through a funding approval process, the funding approval being effected in association with a document collection associated with the project, the document collection maintained in the database, the document collection including a plurality of documents;

performing the funding approval process for the project in the processing system, the funding approval process including:

identifying approvers that comprise an approval hierarchy, the approval hierarchy being a series of approvers;

automatically forwarding a notice requesting approval of at least one electronic document, in the document collection, from a previous approver to a successive one of the approvers upon approval of the at least one electronic document by the previous approver in the approval hierarchy; and

wherein the successive one of the approvers returns the funding approval to the previous approver, the previous approver not being a requestor, the successive one of the approvers returns the funding approval to the requestor;  
accessing the document collection in the database by a vendor;  
the vendor entering and submitting electronically information related to the project;

the vendor determining that funding approval for the project has been secured through access to the document collection; and

transferring monetary funds to the vendor after a predetermined event has occurred;

wherein the predetermined event is the completion of a portion of the project associated with the vendor, and upon completion of the portion of the project associated with the vendor, the vendor submits an invoice via the system, wherein the invoice is electronically transmitted from a vendor workstation;

obtaining an invoice from each vendor once the respective vendor's portion of the project is completed;

subsequent to submission of the invoice by the vendor, a payment associated with the invoice goes through a validation process and is charged against portions of a contract associated with the project;

providing a contract to the vendor, the contract defining tasks to be performed by the vendor, the contract included in the document collection;

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generating, by the processing system, a list of all projects associated with a particular user, each of the projects associated with a document collection;

wherein each of the plurality of documents in the document collection being associated with a respective electronic notebook, the documents in the document collection being electronic documents, each electronic notebook including associated categories, for each electronic notebook the categories provided including:

a comment category that includes general notes;

a status category that includes a status of the project; and

a published notes category, the method including publishing notes in the published notes category to a team working on the project; and

wherein each of the plurality of documents is associated with an object, and the method further including maintaining a state of the object, the state of the object controlling whether documents associated with the object are modifiable, the at least one object being a bid; and

the object is associated with multiple documents of the plurality of documents;  
and

utilizing a table to contain the state of the object, along with a plurality of other objects associated with other documents; and

maintaining a history of revisions to the objects, such that changes in state of the object during the approval process is maintained for auditing purposes.

69. (Canceled)

70. (Canceled)

71. (Canceled)

72. (Canceled)

73. (Canceled)

74. (Previously presented) The method of claim 68, wherein accessing the document collection in the database by the vendor is controlled by access rights, which include a password.

75. (Canceled)

76. (Previously presented) The method of claim 68, wherein the vendor determining that approval for the project has been secured through access to the document collection is effected by the vendor reviewing an electronic copy of a purchase order.

77. (Previously presented) The method of claim 76, wherein the vendor accesses payment confirmations via the processing system.

78. (Previously presented) The method of claim 76, wherein the purchase order is issued to the vendor electronically.

79. (Previously presented) The method of claim 78, wherein the purchase order is issued to the vendor electronically, with a notification being made to a project manager.

80. (Canceled)

81. (Previously presented) The method of claim ~~80~~ 68, wherein the contract further provides for the issuance of change orders by a project manager.

82. (Canceled)

83. (Canceled)

84. (Currently amended) The method of claim 82 68, wherein the project is assigned a project number, which is associated with the document collection.

85. (Currently amended) The method of claim 82 68, wherein the funding approval is part of a Request for Assistance initiated by a client.

86. (Canceled)

87. (Canceled)

88. (Canceled)

89. (Canceled)

90. (Currently amended) The method of claim 82 68, wherein the method further includes soliciting work from the vendors using the processing system.

91. (Canceled)

92. (Previously presented) The method of claim 68, wherein the processing system provides for accessing a listing of Request for Assistance associated with a particular business unit.

93. (Previously presented) The method of claim 68, wherein the processing system provides for a user to access all funding documents for projects on which the user is involved.

94. (Previously presented) The method of claim 68, wherein a review entity provides an evaluation of an offer extended by a vendor.

95. (Previously presented) The method of claim 94, wherein the review entity is a project manager and the offer extended by a vendor is a bid.

96. (Previously presented) The method of claim 68, wherein the funding approval is effected by a client hierarchy.

97. (Previously presented) The method of claim 68, wherein the vendor is a construction entity.

98. (Canceled)

99. (Canceled)

100. (Canceled)

101. (Canceled)

102. (Canceled)

103. (Canceled)

104. (Canceled)

105. (Presently Presented) The method of claim 68, further including organizing the document collection into a variety of tree structures for viewing, one of the tree structures displaying all the documents that a user has approved within a predetermined period of time.

106. (Canceled)

107. (Canceled)

108. (Canceled)

109. (Canceled)

110. (Canceled)

111. (Presently Presented) The method of claim ~~440~~ 68, the construction project being a contract and document collection including contract documents.



112. (New) The method of claim 68 wherein the construction project is engineering related.

113. (New) The method of claim 68, wherein the construction project is architectural related.

114. (New) A processing system for managing a construction project, the processing system performing:

establishing a database in the processing system, the processing system maintained by a project management entity;

providing funding approval associated with the project through a funding approval process, the funding approval being effected in association with a document collection associated with the project, the document collection maintained in the database, the document collection including a plurality of documents;

performing the funding approval process for the project in the processing system, the funding approval process including:

identifying approvers that comprise an approval hierarchy, the approval hierarchy being a series of approvers;

automatically forwarding a notice requesting approval of at least one electronic document, in the document collection, from a previous approver to a successive one of the approvers upon approval of the at least one electronic document by the previous approver in the approval hierarchy; and

wherein the successive one of the approvers returns the funding approval to the previous approver, the previous approver not being the requestor, the successive one of the approvers returns the funding approval to a requestor;

accessing the document collection in the database by a vendor;

the vendor entering and submitting electronically information related to the project;

the vendor determining that funding approval for the project has been secured through access to the document collection; and

transferring monetary funds to the vendor after a predetermined event has occurred;

wherein the predetermined event is the completion of a portion of the project associated with the vendor, and upon completion of the portion of the project associated with the vendor, the vendor submits an invoice via the system, wherein the invoice is electronically transmitted from a vendor workstation;

obtaining an invoice from each vendor once the respective vendor's portion of the project is completed;

subsequent to submission of the invoice by the vendor, a payment associated with the invoice goes through a validation process and is charged against portions of a contract associated with the project;

providing a contract to the vendor, the contract defining tasks to be performed by the vendor, the contract included in the document collection;

generating, by the processing system, a list of all projects associated with a particular user, each of the projects associated with a document collection;

wherein each of the plurality of documents in the document collection being associated with a respective electronic notebook, the documents in the document

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collection being electronic documents, each electronic notebook including associated categories, for each electronic notebook the categories provided including:

- a comment category that includes general notes;

- a status category that includes a status of the project; and

- a published notes category, the method including publishing notes in the published notes category to a team working on the project; and

each of the plurality of documents is associated with an object, and the method further including maintaining a state of the object, the state of the object controlling whether documents associated with the object are modifiable, the at least one object being a bid;

the object is associated with multiple documents of the plurality of documents; and

utilizing a table to contain the state of the object, along with a plurality of other objects associated with other documents; and

maintaining a history of revisions to the objects, such that changes in state of the object during the approval process is maintained for auditing purposes.

### **ALLOWANCE**

The following is an Allowance in response to the Applicant's Amendment filed December 15, 2006 and the Interview with Mr. James Miner on July 31, 2007. Claims 68, 74, 76-79, 81, 84-85, 90, 92-97, 105 and 111-114 are currently pending and allowed.

### **REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE**

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The present invention is directed to a computer implemented method and system for managing construction projects via the creation, maintenance, review and approval of a collection of electronic construction project documents associated with an electronic notebook wherein the document collection includes vendor contracts, vendor invoices, bids and the like and wherein the electronic notebook comprises comment, status and published notes categories.

More specifically the system performs a construction project funding approval process wherein the electronic document collection is approved by a hierarchical series of approvers, reviewed by the vendor and monies, based on the portion of the project completed, are transferred to vendors based on submitted invoices. Further the system associates each of the plurality of documents with an object, wherein the state of the object is maintained, including a history of revisions to the objects, such that changes in state of the object during the approval process is maintained for auditing purposes.

The closest prior art Primavera Expedition, Oracle Projects, Casto et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,038,547, Schuyler et al., Casto et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,832,202, Hoyt et al. 6,067,531, Schuyler et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,832,202 and Saito et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,578,006 fail to teach or suggest either singularly or in combination a system and method for managing the funding approval process for a construction project wherein the system comprises identifying approvers that comprise an approval hierarchy, the approval hierarchy being a series of approvers; automatically forwarding a notice requesting approval of at least one electronic document, in the document collection, from a previous approver to a successive one of the approvers upon approval of the at least one electronic document by the previous approver in the approval hierarchy; and wherein the successive one of the approvers returns the funding approval to the previous approver, the previous approver not being the requestor, the successive one of the approvers returns the funding approval to a requestor; and wherein each of the plurality of documents in the document collection being associated with a respective electronic notebook, the documents in the document collection being electronic documents, each electronic notebook including associated categories, for each electronic notebook the categories provided including: a comment category that includes general notes; a status category that includes a status of the project; and a published notes category, the method including publishing notes in the published notes category to a team working on the project; and each of the plurality of documents is associated with an object, and the method further including maintaining a state of the

object, the state of the object controlling whether documents associated with the object are modifiable, the at least one object being a bid; utilizing a table to contain the state of the object, along with a plurality of other objects associated with other documents; and maintaining a history of revisions to the objects, such that changes in state of the object during the approval process is maintained for auditing purposes as recited in independent Claims 68 and 114.

Primavera Expedition teaches a system and method for managing construction projects that provides document repository and workflow subsystems for creating and managing projects and associated project document collections/data sets wherein the project documents. More specifically Primavera teaches a system and method for providing iding funding approval associated with the project, the funding approval being effected in association with project documentation contained in the database; approval process includes a series of approvers; accessing the document collection by a vendor; the vendor entering/submitting information related to the project electronically; the vendor determining that funding approval for the project has been secured through access to the document collection; transferring monetary funds to the vendor after a predetermined event has occurred such as the completion of a portion of a project; the vendor electronically submitting invoice(s) upon the completion of a portion of the project; providing a contract to the vendor wherein the contract, as part of the project documentation, wherein the contract defines the tasks to be performed by the vendor;

providing a list of all projects associated with a particular user and providing access to project documentation for each project listed.

Primavera Expedition fails to teach or suggest that the system/method for construction project management includes identifying approvers that comprise an approval hierarchy, the approval hierarchy being a series of approvers; automatically forwarding a notice requesting approval of at least one electronic document, in the document collection, from a previous approver to a successive one of the approvers upon approval of the at least one electronic document by the previous approver in the approval hierarchy; and wherein the successive one of the approvers returns the funding approval to the previous approver, the previous approver not being the requestor, the successive one of the approvers returns the funding approval to a requestor; and wherein each of the plurality of documents in the document collection being associated with a respective electronic notebook, the documents in the document collection being electronic documents, each electronic notebook including associated categories, for each electronic notebook the categories provided including: a comment category that includes general notes; a status category that includes a status of the project; and a published notes category, the method including publishing notes in the published notes category to a team working on the project; and each of the plurality of documents is associated with an object, and the method further including maintaining a state of the object, the state of the object controlling whether documents associated with the object are modifiable, the at least one object being a bid; utilizing a table to contain the state of the object, along with a plurality of other objects associated with other

documents; and maintaining a history of revisions to the objects, such that changes in state of the object during the approval process is maintained for auditing purposes as independent claims 68 and 114.

Oracle Projects (Oracle Projects User's Guide, 1998) teaches a computer-implemented method and system for managing projects comprising a plurality of documents including budgets, invoices and the like and an project funding approval process wherein projects are approved based on a collection of documents via a series of approvers and monies are paid based on approved invoices. Oracle Projects fails to teach of suggest identifying approvers that comprise an approval hierarchy, the approval hierarchy being a series of approvers; automatically forwarding a notice requesting approval of at least one electronic document, in the document collection, from a previous approver to a successive one of the approvers upon approval of the at least one electronic document by the previous approver in the approval hierarchy; and wherein the successive one of the approvers returns the funding approval to the previous approver, the previous approver not being the requestor, the successive one of the approvers returns the funding approval to a requestor; and wherein each of the plurality of documents in the document collection being associated with a respective electronic notebook, the documents in the document collection being electronic documents, each electronic notebook including associated categories, for each electronic notebook the categories provided including: a comment category that includes general notes; a status category that includes a status of the project; and a



published notes category, the method including publishing notes in the published notes category to a team working on the project; and each of the plurality of documents is associated with an object, and the method further including maintaining a state of the object, the state of the object controlling whether documents associated with the object are modifiable, the at least one object being a bid; utilizing a table to contain the state of the object, along with a plurality of other objects associated with other documents; and maintaining a history of revisions to the objects, such that changes in state of the object during the approval process is maintained for auditing purposes as recited in independent claims 68 and 114.

Schuyler et al. teach a system and method for routing requests for authorizations wherein the approval process is defined as a workflow and the system comprises: routing requests for approvals based on an approval process/rules that include but is not limited to a series of approvers, hierarchy of approvers; automatically notifies/forwards approval requests/approvals as well as approval status information to the appropriate users; returning funding approval to a previous approver who is not the requester; returning funding approvals to the requestor and previous approver (Column

Schuyler et al. fails to teach or suggest that each of the plurality of documents in the document collection being associated with a respective electronic notebook, the documents in the document collection being electronic documents, each electronic notebook including associated categories, for each electronic notebook the categories provided including: a comment category that includes general notes; a status category

that includes a status of the project; and a published notes category, the method including publishing notes in the published notes category to a team working on the project; and each of the plurality of documents is associated with an object, and the method further including maintaining a state of the object, the state of the object controlling whether documents associated with the object are modifiable, the at least one object being a bid; utilizing a table to contain the state of the object, along with a plurality of other objects associated with other documents; and maintaining a history of revisions to the objects, such that changes in state of the object during the approval process is maintained for auditing purposes as recited in independent claims 68 and 114.

Hoyt et al. teach a computer-implemented method for managing a project using a processing system, the system/method comprising: establishing a database in the system, the system being maintained by a project management entity; providing funding approval associated with the project, the funding being effected in association with a document collection associated with the project, the document collection maintained in the database; accessing the document collection in the database by a vendor; the vendor entering and submitting electronically information related to the project; the vendor determining that approval for the project has been secured through access to the system; multiple level/role-based security; the approval process is executed by a series of hierarchically arranged approvers/reviewers; and providing each user with a

list of the projects (contracts) they are assigned to and provides the data set/document collection associated with each listed project.

Hoyt et al. fails to teach or suggest transferring monetary funds to the vendor after a predetermined event has occurred or identifying approvers that comprise an approval hierarchy, the approval hierarchy being a series of approvers; automatically forwarding a notice requesting approval of at least one electronic document, in the document collection, from a previous approver to a successive one of the approvers upon approval of the at least one electronic document by the previous approver in the approval hierarchy; and wherein the successive one of the approvers returns the funding approval to the previous approver, the previous approver not being the requestor, the successive one of the approvers returns the funding approval to a requestor; and wherein each of the plurality of documents in the document collection being associated with a respective electronic notebook, the documents in the document collection being electronic documents, each electronic notebook including associated categories, for each electronic notebook the categories provided including: a comment category that includes general notes; a status category that includes a status of the project; and a published notes category, the method including publishing notes in the published notes category to a team working on the project; and each of the plurality of documents is associated with an object, and the method further including maintaining a state of the object, the state of the object controlling whether documents associated with the object are modifiable, the at least one object being a bid; utilizing a table to contain the state of the object, along with a plurality of other objects associated with other

documents; and maintaining a history of revisions to the objects, such that changes in state of the object during the approval process is maintained for auditing purposes as recited in independent claims 68 and 114.

Casto et al. teaches a method and system for managing a project comprising: establishing a database; providing funding (financial) approval associated with a project wherein the approval is associated with one or more project documents; vendor access to the database; vendor submitting project information electronically; vendor determining that funding approval for the project has been secured by accessing the project documents; transferring monetary funds to the vendor after a predetermined event has occurred; the project is a construction project; the vendor is a construction entity; upon the completion of a portion of a project the vendor submits an invoice electronically; payment of the invoice goes through a validation process against portions of a project contract; enabling users to "log on" and utilizes well known technologies; - vendor approval determination is based on the vendor's review of a purchase order stored as part of the project documentation; purchase order is issued electronically; providing a contract to a vendor, as part of the project's documentation, wherein the contract defines tasks to be performed by the vendor; a contract that provides for the issuance of change orders by a project manager; obtaining an invoice from each builder once the builder's respective portion of the project is completed; and soliciting work from vendors.

Casto et al. fails to teach or suggest either singular or in combination that the project management systems/methods comprise identifying approvers that comprise an approval hierarchy, the approval hierarchy being a series of approvers; automatically forwarding a notice requesting approval of at least one electronic document, in the document collection, from a previous approver to a successive one of the approvers upon approval of the at least one electronic document by the previous approver in the approval hierarchy; and wherein the successive one of the approvers returns the funding approval to the previous approver, the previous approver not being the requestor, the successive one of the approvers returns the funding approval to a requestor; and wherein each of the plurality of documents in the document collection being associated with a respective electronic notebook, the documents in the document collection being electronic documents, each electronic notebook including associated categories, for each electronic notebook the categories provided including: a comment category that includes general notes; a status category that includes a status of the project; and a published notes category, the method including publishing notes in the published notes category to a team working on the project; and each of the plurality of documents is associated with an object, and the method further including maintaining a state of the object, the state of the object controlling whether documents associated with the object are modifiable, the at least one object being a bid; utilizing a table to contain the state of the object, along with a plurality of other objects associated with other documents; and maintaining a history of revisions to the objects, such that changes in

state of the object during the approval process is maintained for auditing purposes as recited in independent Claims 68 and 114.

Saito et al. teach a project management system and method comprising a electronic project notebook containing a collection of documents associated with a project.

Saito et al. fails to teach of suggest identifying approvers that comprise an approval hierarchy, the approval hierarchy being a series of approvers; automatically forwarding a notice requesting approval of at least one electronic document, in the document collection, from a previous approver to a successive one of the approvers upon approval of the at least one electronic document by the previous approver in the approval hierarchy; and wherein the successive one of the approvers returns the funding approval to the previous approver, the previous approver not being the requestor, the successive one of the approvers returns the funding approval to a requestor; and each of the plurality of documents is associated with an object, and the method further including maintaining a state of the object, the state of the object controlling whether documents associated with the object are modifiable, the at least one object being a bid; utilizing a table to contain the state of the object, along with a plurality of other objects associated with other documents; and maintaining a history of revisions to the objects, such that changes in state of the object during the approval process is maintained for auditing purposes as recited in independent Claims 68 and 114.

None of the prior art of record, taken individually or in any combination, teach, inter alia, a computer implemented method and system for managing the funding approval for construction projects wherein the system comprises identifying approvers that comprise an approval hierarchy, the approval hierarchy being a series of approvers; automatically forwarding a notice requesting approval of at least one electronic document, in the document collection, from a previous approver to a successive one of the approvers upon approval of the at least one electronic document by the previous approver in the approval hierarchy; and wherein the successive one of the approvers returns the funding approval to the previous approver, the previous approver not being the requestor, the successive one of the approvers returns the funding approval to a requestor; and wherein each of the plurality of documents in the document collection being associated with a respective electronic notebook, the documents in the document collection being electronic documents, each electronic notebook including associated categories, for each electronic notebook the categories provided including: a comment category that includes general notes; a status category that includes a status of the project; and a published notes category, the method including publishing notes in the published notes category to a team working on the project; and each of the plurality of documents is associated with an object, and the method further including maintaining a state of the object, the state of the object controlling whether documents associated with the object are modifiable, the at least one object being a bid; utilizing a table to contain the state of the object, along with a plurality of other objects associated with other

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documents; and maintaining a history of revisions to the objects, such that changes in state of the object during the approval process is maintained for auditing purposes as recited in independent Claims 68 and 114.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."



***Conclusion***

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

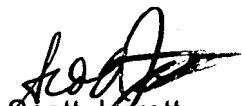
- Muranga et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,671,428, teach a document management system and method comprising document versioning.
- Crookshanks, U.S. Patent No. 7,089,203, teach a construction project contract management system and method.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Scott L. Jarrett whose telephone number is (571) 272-7033. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 8:00AM - 5:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Hafiz Tariq can be reached on (571) 272-6729. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



Scott Jarrett  
Asst. Examiner  
August 1, 2007



TARIQ R. HAFIZ  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600